Twitter Thread by Cathy Davidson



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1-Every prof and teacher I know is having a really hard time at end of term. Everyone is overwhelmed. So are our students. So are university staff and administrators (hard to believe, right?) Everyone is working night and day, feeling inefficient, overwhelmed...

2-One way to address this, for those still having classes post-Thanksgiving, is like a friend (everyone's anonymous in this thread: they can out themselves!) who told students, if they wished, they could end their term w all the work they'd done pre-Thanskgiving and be done.

3-Another friend announced post Thanksgiving that the final exam would be "open everything" and they could work together if they wishes as long as they also submitted a signed "study/crib sheet" along w the final. They warned working together might hurt them because it slows.

4-Another friend--genius scholar and prof at an Ivy--had a "PJ day" where they came to class in flannel pjs and students did to and they played them a thank you song for their resilience and care on the guitar (their Covid hobby is learning to play guitar).

5-Another friend called off a week of class and held "open collective off hours" in those slots where anyone could ask and talk about anything--the most responsive week they've had all term and everyone learned far more than usual and it nourished them all.

6-Another friend told students in advance that they could take the regular final or write questions out and answer them. They recommended students answer during the prescribed exam time so this stayed manageable.

7-Anyone who thinks these make classes "too easy" is thinking in the "sequestered problem solving" mode which makes higher ed ludicrous, a pretense that in everyday life and work we don't search for just about everything and make judgments based on that knowledge.

8-Once you realize this is a ludicrous assumption, and we should be teaching how to learn, how to judge good info from bad, how to take what's out there and turn it into something that addresses the question at hand, college becomes more relevant, meaningful, and less stressful

9-"Sequestered problem solving" is high stakes in that it minimizes the goal of "learning" and maximizes sequestering--what did you learn in 'this' class, how did you learn to answer 'me,' with 'my' (the prof's) assumptions and knowledge in tact.

10-One-way learning in a closed system (trad higher ed), in pandemic world, where everything is closed off, adds trauma of an archaic high stakes system of judgment and credentialing to what should be the joy, agency, and empowerment of learning. @AnyClassroom @nemersonian

11-Final bonus: if you as prof value learning (not grading, testing, one-way data transmission etc), it's not being "soft" (students learn more!) but is far easier emotionally on students and you too. @AnyClassroom

12-Meta-study of 225+ studies of active learning benefit: Freeman, et al, “Active learning increases student performance in science, engineering, and mathematics,” Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, vol. 111, no. 23, 2014, pp. 8410-8415, https://t.co/1Up4GXE2C8.

13- And Theobald, E. J., et al., “Active learning narrows achievement gaps for underrepresented students in undergraduate science, technology, engineering, and math,” Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, vol. 117, no. 12, 2014, pp. 6476-6483, https://t.co/UMekvVnxrk

14"I canceled final project. Class won’t meet last week; instead students can complete any missing work from semester revise any assignment for a higher grade. 'Cuz no zoom meetings, I’ll have time to give feedback etc It’s least stressed my students & I have felt all semester!